

## BOOK REVIEW

JANET CHUI AND JASON LUNDBERG. 2008. **A Field Guide to Surreal Botany**. (ISBN 978-9810810177, pbk.). Two Cranes Press, Singapore Post Centre, P.O. Box 034, Singapore 914002. (**Orders:** [www.twocranespress.com](http://www.twocranespress.com)). \$12.00, 70 pp., 5 1/2" × 8".

*A Field Guide to Surreal Botany* is an anthology of fictional plant species that exist beyond the realm of the real. Another work in the same genre is *Parallel Botany*, by Leo Lionni. This small book is a bit of lunacy sure to appeal to slightly twisted plant lovers and botanists everywhere.

As they say, presentation is everything. This appears to be an old-fashioned botanical treatise with its delicate illustrations, Latin names, notes on ecology and life cycle, and seemingly aged paper. Great care has been put into making the entries read as real and authentic, but the sly hints and literary winks let the readers know they are in on some way-cool joke with the writers. It is an example of what can be done when you lavish care and attention on a literary project. It literally oozes quality. This is a small press title that exceeded my expectations and is irresistible on every level.

It is arranged geographically by regions of the world and fully illustrated by Janet Chui. It is hard to choose a favorite from among the many species. Amongst my favorites are the Forget-me-bastard which merely causes itching, stinging, and rash in defense of the main caregiver of the garden in which they grow; the Time Cactus that can trick the unwary researcher or amateur botanist into a quite deadly trance (sending their nutrients back along a wormhole to a previous time of scarcity); and the Kvetching Aspen, which is the only known tree with a mating cry.

Janet Chui and Jason Lundberg met at the 2002 Clarion Writers Workshop in Michigan. They formed Two Cranes Press, an independent publisher, in 2003, and moved from Raleigh, North Carolina, to Singapore where it is now based. Two Cranes was set up to publish speculative fiction and has published three other works.—Gary L. Jennings, Librarian, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-4025, U.S.A.